The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting, or occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information as will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

Some men are great because their associates are little.—Johnson.

WHOLE NO. 930. WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1929. FRANK MORRISON, Secretary VOL. 18, NO. 47.

PUBLIC OPINION IS BASIS OF LAW; AGITATION CHANGES VIEWS

Trade unionists agitate against social wrong because they know the power of public opinion. This force will break every influence reaction can assemble, but privilege is careful to conceal their slender foundation that rests on ignorance and indifference.

Public opinion must be a sound development that follows a long campaign of education. This is the price of progress.

James Bryce, author of "American Commonwealth," and former British ambassador to Washington, declared that "public opinion is stronger in America than anywhere else in the world."

The British historian and jurist reminds Americans that their Constitution is not a rigid document, but that "the brevity and the generality of its words" leaves a wide field for changes that are needed through new viewpoints and better understandings of social problems.

These viewpoints, says Bryce, "must be that of the people at their best moments."

Our Constitutional Fathers did not make it easy to amend the Constitution. They were alert to the danger of passing emotion and transitory impulse.

They provided for changes, but these must be so essential to popular welfare that the people will overcome high barriers that have been erected to check hasty and ill-considered action.

This sound public opinion, that grows out of our experience and needs, is the basis of law. Its operation was shown in the establishment of public schools, free text books, secret ballot in public elections, workmen's compensation, safety measures and scores of other remedial acts.

No wrong can withstand a popular realization of injustice. By this is not meant spasmodic protest against wrong by even a considerable group of citizens, but rather a nation-wide knowledge of injustice and a realization that enlightened self-interest and popular welfare calls for a removal of the grievance.

If the evils of the labor injunction, child labor, low wages, occupational diseases and other ills were woven into the nation's social consciousness nothing could stay their removal.

New social outlooks is the last thing that men will accept. They pride themselves on "marching with progress," except in these. They cling to the old until they are aroused through education and intelligent self-interest. Lawmakers and courts bow to the new ideal.

Trade unionists are aware of this tendency. They are ceaseless in urging education, organization and agitation. They know evil must still suffer. Neither will a spirited campaign of short duration that is invariably followed by discouragement that brings joy to reaction. It is this knowledge that makes our unions invulnerable.

Trade unionists plead with the unorganized to join with them that the day of social justice and the removal of wrong may be hastened.

Green Strips Brookwood Issue; Exposes 'School-Freedom' Plea

Organized labor does not attempt to interfere with the academic freedom of Brookwood College. This institution can employ Communist instructors, can preach "red" philosophy, can attack A. F. of L. officials and can favor dual organizations of workers. The trade unions only insist on their right to withhold support from such an institution.—President Green.

Washington, Feb. 2.—In a smashing reply to Brookwood critics of the A. F. of L., President Green asks if these critics believe A. F. of L. officials "would be such mollycoddles as to fail to strike back when the fundamentals of the American trade union structure are assailed, ridiculed and denounced?"

Mr. Green shatters the claim that officials of Brookwood College were not permitted to answer "charges" before the A. F. of L. Executive Council recommended affiliates withdraw their support from that institution.

The Executive Council had no jurisdiction over Brookwood; it is a private institution, said Mr. Green. Under these conditions the council could "very properly be admonished to mind its own business."

What the council did, continues Mr. Green, was to inquire into the educational policies of a private institution that was aided by trade union funds. Brookwood's right to employ Communist instructors, to extol the "red" philosophy, to support dual labor organizations, and to assail trade union policies and officials is acknowledged by Mr. Green, but he points out that the trade unions reserve the right to decide whether they will support such an institution.

The "academic plea" of Brookwood is shattered by calling attention to the inconsistency of sending a student to college to be taught theology by an atheistic professor.

"Psychology," said Mr. Green, "a Communist professor is just as unfitted to teach students economics and concerning trade unionism as an atheistic professor is to teach theology.

"There has ever been a continued conflict between those who practice trade unionism, as interpreted and expounded by the A. F. of L., and those who have sought to substitute therefor visionary, nebulous theories which, if accepted, would lead the army of organized labor into the field of experimentation and speculation. We have more than half a century of experience behind us—much of it bitter and costly—and out of it we have developed a trade union philosophy applicable to our common needs and purposes.

"We can not afford to pause in the great economic struggle while we experiment with vague, siren-like impractical theories, even though they may be advocated by well-meaning educators and the editors of religious and liberal political publications. We are dealing with human life and human values."

Socialists Have European Outlook; Fights On Unions Were 'Senseless'

New York, Feb. 2.—The Socialist Party's attitude toward trade unions has been one of "senseless condemnation," says Abraham Cahan, veteran member of the Socialist Party and editor of the Jewish Forward, writing in the New Leader, "an official publication of the Socialist Party."

The Socialists' attack was waged for years prior to the World War, President Gompers and officials of A. F. of L. national and international affiliates were the target for Socialists, whose policy was identical to present-day Communists—stop at no slander or libel to weaken these officials in the eyes of organized labor.

Mr. Cahan now confesses this policy was wrong. He accepts the trade union theory that class feeling is foreign to the American ideal.

"There is every reason in the world," he says, "why class feeling should be alive in the European wage earner. Cases of toilers reaching higher rounds of the economic and social ladder in Germany, France and England are extremely rare. Once a wage earner always a wage earner. The rule is bred in the workingman's bone.

"The case is strikingly different in the United States where instances of poor farmers or mechanics achieving wealth and social position are so frequent as to be considered a most commonplace and natural occurrence.

"Our attitude toward the American trade unions was, in the course of many years, one of senseless condemnation. We would assail their leaders with streams of diatribe, holding them responsible for the indifference of their men to our class talk. In other words, we called them violent names because they would not change the psychology of the American masses to suit our philosophy."

Mr. Cahan says "the majority of Americans in our party were drawn not from workmen, but from the middle class."

During the stormy contests between trade unionists and Socialists, the former repeatedly made this claim against those who would change the philosophy and tactics of organized labor, and who would drive wage earners into this middle-class camp.

The views so declared prove that the Socialists had the European outlook and were ignorant of American ideals.

Mr. Cahan now accepts the trade union position.

SAFETY PLAN DITCHED; SENATORS CRY "OVER"

Washington, Feb. 2.—The Congressional Record, January 28 issue, contains this information:

"The bill (S. 1266) to create in the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor a division of safety was announced as next in order.

"Several Senators: 'Over.'

"The Vice President: 'The bill will be passed over.'

Thousands of workers are annually killed in industry and hundreds of thousands are permanently and partially injured. The bill would create a government bureau that would study safety in industry, standardize models of safety appliances and create a safety-in-industry psychology throughout the nation.

But several Senators cry "Over" and the holocaust continues while the bill is again idetracked.

CONVICT LAW PEN GIVEN TO LABOR

Washington, Feb. 2.—President Coolidge has presented the American Federation of Labor the pen with which he signed the Hawes-Cooper convict labor bill.

The act is effective in five years. It empowers state legislatures to amend their convict labor laws so that convict-made goods shipped from other states will be subject to convict-labor laws in which they have been sold. These goods are now protected by interstate commerce rules, laws and regulations.

"The passage of this legislation is the climax of years of effort by the American Federation of Labor," said President Green, in a public statement. "It is a great achievement and is a forward step in human betterment and social progress.

"Until it becomes operative prison authorities and the people in the different states can prepare to adjust themselves to the change.

"It is the purpose of the A. F. of L., through central bodies and State Federations of Labor, to solicit State Legislatures to enact legislation supplementing the state-use convict labor legislation in effect by the additional legislation which will prevent the shipment of convict-made goods in interstate for sale in competition with goods manufactured by free labor. This proposed legislation will not interfere with the sale of goods manufactured by convict labor."

VICIOUS INJUNCTION MILL IS BUSY

Federal Judge Coleman, New York district, has ruled, in effect, that members of the Actors' Equity Association can not select the labor agencies they would patronize in seeking employment.

Legislation has failed to end abuses that have developed under the private agency system and as a last resort the actors prepared a list of agents who agreed to abandon gouging practices.

The "racketeer" agencies object. They claim a "property right" in the patronage of men and women who seek employment and who agree between themselves to ask aid only from those who will charge them a reasonable fee.

Judge Colemin enjoins this voluntary association from enforcing their agreement.

The court order is one of many vicious aspects of the injunction evil.

Only those who work for wages are subject to this process. If a group of manufacturers compiled a list of middle men who agreed to treat them fairly in marketing their goods, gouging middle men who formerly had that business would be laughed at if they asked for an injunction.

When workers are involved, however, any wrong can be upheld if the plaintiff weaves an illusory "property right" around it.

Organized labor protests against the usurpation of equity judges who interfere with personal rights whenever profits are involved and who class as "property" such intangible things as patronage and good will.

Middle-Aged Men and Large Families Barred by Private Liability Concerns

Albany, N. Y., Feb. 2.—Private compensation companies in this state offer cheaper rates to employers who will not employ persons over 40. Physical examinations are made a condition of employment. Compensation insurance premiums are reduced if persons above 40 and persons with minor physical defects are not employed.

The insurance companies also offer cheaper rates where a worker with a large family is not employed. When such a worker is killed his widow and children can collect higher damages than if the worker was unmarried or had no children, if married.

Senator Downing and Assemblyman Livingston hope to end these vicious practices by the state legislature's adoption of their joint bill providing for a state insurance fund that will eliminate private compensation companies.

SECRET TAX REFUNDS OPPOSED BY SENATOR

Washington, Feb. 2—The Treasury Department's system of secret tax refunds to large taxpayers was denounced as "rotten to the core," by Senator McKellar in opposing what he declared to be "class legislation."

Mr. McKellar quoted a Treasury official who testified "in substance that the payment of refunds to big taxpayers was provisional only and that they immediately filed applications for refunds.

"The ordinary income taxpayer has no such agreement with the government. He pays his taxes and that's the end of it," said Mr. McKellar.

"An official of the Treasury, who sees a chance for a back taxpayer to get out of a large portion of his tax, will constantly have the temptation to resign and go and tell the taxpayer in the hope that the taxpayer will recover and divide the amount with him. Such an eventuality has too often happened.

"Besides, the hearings are secret and, where there are secret hearings, there is every opportunity for wrong-doing upon the part of the agents of the Government.

"These tax refunds, including credits, during the last eight years have amounted to between $400,000,000 and $500,000,000 a year. They are in the nature of favors granted special taxpayers.

"Those who are on the inside know how to get the returns, or those who are able to employ those on the inside know how to get the returns. The way it is being conducted, it is really a species of graft. The whole matter is bartered for in secret, the money paid is secret, and with Senate and House committees flouted when they ask for information."

WORKERS ARE IGNORED IN BANKRUPTCY PLEA

San Jose, Calif., Feb. 2.—The Union Gazette approves the action of a group of citizens in this city who intervened to prevent the continuance of a gasoline war that would bring bankruptcy to these business men.

"But why did those citizens stop with the gasoline war?" asks the labor paper.

"The 'American Planners' formed an anti-union association seven years ago that put building craftsmen and contractors into a conflict with each other.

"Workers are cutting wages and their purchasing power has been so lowered that the retail business of the city is losing thousands of dollars each week below what it would be if this economic mischief had not been started.

"The gasoline arguments apply to the present building trades disaster. Workers and retail business men face bankruptcy, as did gasoline dealers."

"SLOW DOWN" POLICY IS FAVORED

The Department of Agriculture has released this significant statement to American farmers:

"In view of the probability of another large crop of hard winter wheat in 1929, spring wheat farmers should hesitate to increase their present acreage of hard spring wheat."

No one objects to Uncle Sam warning farmers not to glut the market and destroy prices, but why can't the same reasoning apply to workers who would reduce hours?

No responsible business man will deny that markets would be quickly flooded if our industrial machine were operated 100 per cent.

These business men are striving to "stabilize" their industry—to produce only enough to meet consumption, just as farmers are advised.

Workers are not included in this policy. They are displaced by automatic machinery, new processes are being installed and the army of unemployed grows, while their attempt to reduce hours is resisted.

If they advocated a "slow down" policy, as does the government and business men, they would be classed as conspirators.

Workers can change this double standard if they organize and thus secure economic power that invariably commands respect.

PUBLIC PAY BRIBES USED BY UNION FOE

Minneapolis, Feb. 2.—Indictment of two city councilmen for accepting $500 bribes from a representative of the American Radiators and Foam Corporation in the purchase of a fire engine, reveals how anti-union concerns would smash trade unions and place burdens on the public.

The LaFrance corporation is located in Elmira, New York, and is warring on the Machinists' union. Local trade unionists objected to the city's purchase of these fire engines. The protest was ignored, and on its first trip the apparatus ran amuck, smashing two automobiles and injured the occupants. Later one city councilman confessed that he accepted a $500 bribe. He involved two colleagues and resigned. The two have been indicted.

It is charged that the city was overcharged $3,310, enough for the bribes and $1,800 for "incidental" expenses.

Hudson, Wis., Feb. 2.—The city council refused to buy a fire engine from the LaFrance Corporation of Elmira, N. Y. City officials learned of the "demonstration" made by an engine manufactured by strikebreakers employed by this concern and sold to the city of Minneapolis. Two autos were wrecked. Indictments of Minneapolis city councilmen was another factor in causing local officials to shun this union-busting concern.

SCIENCE EXPANDS AGE; PENSION RELIEF GROWS

New York, Feb. 2.—As the age of man is prolonged by science, the need for an old-age pension increases, according to officials of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.

Association officials state that probably between 15 and 20 per cent of the people of this country over 65 are either wholly or partly dependent on others for support.

"The percentage of people 65 and over has increased, according to the United States census, from 2.8 per cent of the population in 1850 to 4.6 per cent in 1920, an increase over 64 per cent," the report said.

The statistical fact that the normal life span in the United States has risen from approximately 40 years in 1850 to 56 in 1920, due chiefly to scientific progress, is observed by the report, which says:

"Population experts estimate that this trend will steadily increase until it reaches 9 or 10 per cent of the population. It is obvious, therefore, that old age is a large and steadily increasing problem."

CREDIT STRANGLED BY BOOTLEG BANKING

Washington, Feb. 2.—The Federal Reserve System, which is intended to guard the nation's credit and stop money stringencies, was attacked by Dr. H. Parker Willis, professor of banking in Columbia University, at a meeting of bankers in this city. Bankers were called upon to stop gambling in Wall Street with the people's money.

The New Yorker blamed the Federal Reserve System for business bankruptcies last year that made a new record in this country.

Our boasted prosperity, the speaker said, is not general. Of the 425,000 concerns which filed their schedules with the government last year, about 45 per cent reported no taxable income. This is an increase of 10 per cent over 1922. Business has suffered because of interest charges that have advanced from 20 to 50 per cent.

"The truth is," continued Dr. Parker, "that for long years past the Federal Reserve System has been wasting its resources and following unsound banking principles in several distinct directions."

The Federal Reserve System was called upon to cease aiding "Wall Street stock jugglers and gamblers" and "bootlegging its accommodations to the stock market." Banks were also called upon to "reduce their commitments on purely speculative or trading accounts to some figure taken as basic or normal."

This was a diplomatic suggestion that bankers cease using the people's money to gamble in Wall Street.

SHORTER WEEK FOES TAKE EXPECTED STAND

Minneapolis, Feb. 2.—The Building Employers' Association has declared against the five-day week and the Minneapolis Labor Review says this is no more news "than if the public were informed that a cat had caught a mouse."

"Had they taken opposite action," says the Labor Review, "it would have been as startling news as that a mouse caught a cat.

"No organization has saddled the state and our cities with more expense for carving to the needy, with more misery and poverty than this same association.

President McSorley of the Building Trades Department, A. F. of L., who visited Minneapolis recently, declared that there is more poverty and misery in any city of its size in the country.

INDUSTRIAL ILLS SHOULD BE PAID FOR

New York, Feb. 2.—The state compensation law should cover occupational diseases, said Miss Frances Perkins, State Industrial Commissioner, at a conference held by the Industrial Survey Commission.

Miss Perkins said industrial diseases are on the increase because of the use of chemicals. She emphasized the effect of chemicals in producing disease and mentioned the dangers of menthol chloride, emanations from radioactive properties, dust from limestone and other poisonous dusts which affect the lungs and other parts of the body. She condemned the "bargain counter attitude" of commercial examinations to determine a claimant's injuries.

Dr. M. O'Hanlon, secretary of the State Federation of Labor, agreed with Miss Perkins' suggestion regarding occupational diseases, declaring that bruises and callous conditions suffered by cleaners and other workmen from constant kneeling often set up irregularities in the body which result in disease and general disability.

DECLARES MERGERS OFTEN ILL-ADVISED

New York, Feb. 2.—"Business mergers and consolidations are not a guarantee of success," said Virgil Jordan, economist of the National Industrial Conference Board, in an address to a convention of lumbermen in this city.

"These combines have not proved, and are not likely to be a panacea for excess capacity, overproduction, cut-throat competition or a royal road to exceptionally large profits in any field," he said.

"Many mergers that have been promoted by financial interests in recent years have been based upon exaggerated hopes or uninformed calculations that has disappointed investors. If the merger movement is going on strongly today it is chiefly because the widespread ignorance or fundamental business conditions and the fantastic security market, based upon this ignorance, have offered a profitable opportunity to unload contingent securities upon the general public."

HIGHER POSTAGE FAVORED FOR "CHAIN" NEWSPAPERS

Washington, Feb. 2.—Senator Harris favors taxing future "chain" newspapers out of existence. A bill introduced by the Georgia lawmaker would deny second-class mailing privileges to all but one of these newspapers. "Chains" now in existence are not affected.

ACTORS CAN'T CHOOSE THEIR LABOR AGENTS

New York, Feb. 2.—Actors' Equity Association have been temporarily enjoined from attempting to correct the evil of gouging labor agencies.

Federal Judge Frank J. Coleman issued the order which prohibits the association from enforcing its rule that members shall do business with agencies that have a permit from the association.

The plaintiff described himself not as a gouging labor shark but as "a general representative of actors." He said his business "including advising and assisting them in obtaining employment on a percentage basis."

The Equity rule, adopted last September, was forced on the association by actors and actresses, who have long been victims of these labor agencies.

PRIVATE DICKS "IN BAD"

Trenton, N. J., Feb. 2.—The testimony of private detectives should be considered with care, ruled the State Supreme Court in upholding a lower court's decision in a divorce case.

PRINTERS RAISE WAGES

Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Feb. 2.—Commercial shop printers secured a $1 an hour award from an arbitration board. The old rate was 96 cents. The usual union-shop clause is inserted.

"FARM" IMMIGRANTS USED TO LOWER WAGES

Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, Feb. 2.—Colonization agencies are flooding Canada with farm labor, it was declared by delegates to the convention of the Alberta Federation of Labor.

The immigrants are induced to come to Alberta as agricultural laborers. The convention demanded that this immigration be carefully handled by the government.

Officials of the Federation were in progress upon the provincial government the need for an old-age pension act. Under the Dominion old-age pension act provinces may adopt this law at their option. If they do, the Dominion government pays one-half of the cost.

SHIP OWNERS ACCEPT SAFETY PLAN; RIGID FOREIGN LAWS FORCE ACTION

Washington, Feb. 2.—Ship owners informed the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries that they favor load line legislation that will apply to coastwise and intercoastal trade. A load line prohibits overloading of vessels.

Ship owners, on the surface, apear as humanitarians, but advocates of safety of life and property at sea whisper that the dollar instinct is behind the ship owners' unexpected position.

All European countries have load line legislation and at the Sixty-ninth Congress, American shipowners attempted to get a load line for the foreign trade that would protect them against enforcement of load line laws in European ports.

The plan failed because the ship owners refused to include coastwise and intercoastal trade, which comprises 90 per cent of the American merchant marine. Friends of safety at sea showed that ships in the coastwise and intercoastal trade.

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"S O S" IS A SIGNAL

Washington, Feb. 2.—Radio authorities are deluged by inquiries as to the meaning of the radio distress call letters "S O S." It is explained that the letters have no meaning in themselves, and that it is an error to suppose that they mean "Save Our Ship."

The letters were selected by the International Radiotelegraph Conference in London in 1912 because the combination of three dots, three dashes and three dots are so simple that even the most inexperienced radio operator can detect them. Previously the distress call was "C D Q."

SYNDICALISM BILL OPPOSED BY UNIONS

Denver, Feb. 2.—Organized labor opposes the criminal syndicalism bill pending in the state legislature. The proposed law is a camouflaged plan that its authors allege is only intended to reach avowed revolutionists.

The unionists point out that the act would authorize attacks on civil liberties while professing to protect the state against revolutionists.

FUNDS ARE REQUESTED TO AID CHILD WELFARE

Washington, Feb. 2.—An annual appropriation of $1,000,000 to create a child welfare extension service in the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor was advocated before a House committee. The project was favored by A. F. of L. representatives and child welfare and social workers, and is designed to aid in the reduction of infant and maternal mortality.

MINE BILL WOULD FREE LABOR FROM OWNERS' 'YELLOW DOG'

Washington, Feb. 2.—There is little likelihood of the coal regulation bill, introduced by Senator Watson, being passed by this session of Congress, when it adjourns on March 4.

The bill would rectify conditions in the bituminous industry and is favored by the United Mine Workers. It is the result of personal investigations in the Pittsburgh district by a Senate sub-committee, and follows acknowledgments by coal operators that their industry is in a "deplorable" condition.

The operators oppose the bill and propose no substitute. The chief charge that this opposition is based on the feature of the bill which would outlaw the "yellow dog" and permit miners to organize.

T. C. Townsend, attorney for the United Mine Workers, agreed that the bill would outlaw the "yellow dog."

"If its enactment did no more than this it would stand as a monument to the wisdom of Congress," said Mr. Townsend. The attorney pointed out that New York State courts refuse to enforce "yellow dog" contracts on the ground that these contracts are against public policy. A sub-committee of the Senate Judiciary Committee also proposes to outlaw this one-sided contract in its substitute for the Shipstead anti-labor injunction bill.

"The charge that this bill is an unwarranted attempt to inject government into private affairs is absurd," Mr. Townsend. "The same argument was heard when regulation of railroads, the meat industry, public utilities, workmen's compensation and other legislation was proposed.

"I would remind Senators that Alexander Hamilton, who is given credit for having some knowledge of the Constitution, once declared that every proposed law which some person did not like was unconstitutional."

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WOMEN'S LAW FOUGHT; LOW COST INVOLVED

Detroit, Feb. 2.—Two courts in this city upheld the conviction of an office building owner who was fined $25 for refusing to obey the state law which calls for seats in elevators operated by women.

The defendant refuses to accept the decisions and has appealed the case to the State Supreme Court.

In the original trial, Judge Jeffries scored the defendant for his unsocial outlook. The cost of the seats would be but a few dollars, but the owner claims his "right to run his own business" is interfered with.